



Michigan Supreme Court

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Carl L. Gromek, Chief of Staff
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March 23, 2006

TO: All Judges

FROM: Carl L. Gromek

SUBJECT: Reporting Caseload Statistics

There have been a number of comments from judges – most recently, during the Chief Judge and Court Administrator Seminar – about collecting Caseload Reporting Part 4 (Time Guidelines) data. I believe that there is a general misunderstanding about the reasons for collecting the data, as well as some apprehension about how it will be used.

Let me assure you that the Time Guidelines are just that – guidelines, not standards. They are intended to promote fair, effective, and efficient case management. The only way to assess case management is to collect data that shows how long it takes to process cases. Also, through Administrative Order 2003-7, the Michigan Supreme Court explicitly recognized that case management is the judiciary's responsibility. Accordingly, the Part 4 data will be used to: 1) assess the appropriateness of the time guidelines, and 2) help courts assess and improve their caseload management plans.

Evaluating time guidelines for the state as a whole and improving caseload management at the local level are interrelated. Both involve collecting and analyzing Part 4 data and other information.

There may be legitimate reasons why individual judges and courts cannot meet the guidelines. Your cooperation, including your efforts to meet the Time Guidelines, will help SCAO assess the guidelines and your court's need for assistance. At any time, you can request caseload management assistance from our office. Please contact your Regional Administrator to discuss upcoming seminars or support tailored to your court.

Based on the concerns I heard from judges last week, it is clear to me that we at SCAO could have done a better job communicating with you about the purposes of collecting Part 4 data. For that, I apologize, and I thank the judges for sharing their concerns with me.